AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A microporous soundproofing material comprising an expanded material formed through the step of impregnating a mixture of ~~a thermoplastic elastomer and a thermoplastic polymer which is not a thermoplastic elastomer~~ an olefin elastomer and an olefin polymer with an inert gas under high pressure of from 6 to 100 MPa and then decompressing the impregnated mixture, wherein the expanded material comprises closed cells having an average cell diameter of from 0.1 to 300 μm uniformly distributed throughout the whole interior thereof, wherein the expanded material has a compressive load at 50% compression of 20 N/cm^2 or lower, and wherein the ratio of characteristic impedance of the microporous soundproofing material to characteristic impedance of air (Z_c^{mat}/Z_c) is from 5 to 50.

2. (previously presented) The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the expanded material is formed from an unexpanded molding comprising the thermoplastic elastomer.

3. (previously presented): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the expanded material is formed from a molten thermoplastic elastomer, and the impregnated elastomer is subjected to molding simultaneously with decompression.

4. (previously presented): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the expanded material has undergone heating after the decompression.

5. (original): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the inert gas is carbon dioxide.

6. (original): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the inert gas is in a supercritical state during the impregnation.

7. (original): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the inert gas has a pressure of 10 MPa or higher during the impregnation.

8. (previously presented): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the expanded material has a cell density of from 10^5 to 10^{14} cells per cm^3.

9. (previously presented): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the expanded material comprises closed cells having an average cell diameter of from 0.1 to 20 μm evenly distributed throughout the whole interior thereof, and the expanded material has a cell density of from $3x10^8$ to 10^{14} cells per cm^3.

10. (previously presented): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the expanded material has a relative density of 0.6 or lower.

Claims 11-12 (canceled).

13. (previously presented): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 1, wherein the expanded material contains a flame retardant.

14. (original): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 13, wherein the flame retardant comprises a hydrated metal compound, a bromine compound or a mixture thereof.

15. (original): The microporous soundproofing material of claim 14, wherein the hydrated metal compound is a composite metal hydroxide represented by formula (1):

$$m(M_aO_b)\ n(Q_dO_e)\ cH_2O \qquad (1)$$

wherein M and Q represent different metal elements and Q is a metal element belonging to a group selected from Groups IVa, Va, VIa, VIIa, VIII, Ib, and IIb of the periodic table; and m, n, a, b, c, d, and e may be the same or different and each is a positive number.

16. (previously presented): A method of improving the soundproofing performance of an electronic appliance, which comprises applying the microporous soundproofing material of claim 1 inside the electronic appliance.

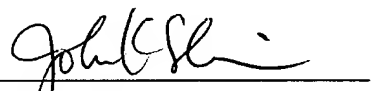
REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 13-16 are pending in the application. In claim 1, the language "a mixture of a thermoplastic elastomer and a thermoplastic polymer which is not a thermoplastic elastomer" is amended to "a mixture of an olefin elastomer and an olefin polymer". Support can be found, for example, at page 8, lines 13-14 of the specification as originally filed. No new matter is added. Entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully submit that neither WO 99/47573 nor Cha et al contains any disclosure, teaching or suggestion of the above claimed blend. WO 99/47573 describes a blend of a polyurethane which is a thermoplastic elastomer and a polyolefin which is a non-elastomeric thermoplastic polymer. Claim 1 as amended recites, inter alia, "an olefin elastomer," which excludes the polyurethane of WO'573.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



John K. Shin
Registration No. 48,409

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE
23373
CUSTOMER NUMBER

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